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I N D I A R E F O R M

AND

NATIVE RIGHTS.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF

A P U B L I C E E T I N G

HELD IN

THE WESTMINSTER FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1857.

LONDON: W. TWEEDIE, 337 STRAND.

A PUBLIC MEETING on the subject of INDIA REFORM and NATIVE RIGHTS was held at the Friends' Meeting House, Westminster, on Thursday Evening, November 5th.

MALCOLM LEWIN, Esq., late second Judge of the Sudder Court of Madras, having been called to the Chair amid loud cheers, said that the object of the Meeting was not to cast censure upon any one, nor to enter into a political disquisition on the present or future Government of India : the object was, to bring the natives of India before the Meeting in their true character, and to shew that they were objects of great and humane consideration. (Hear hear.) Whatever crimes may be attributable to the natives of India in this revolt, they are at any rate entitled to justice, as every man was. (Hear, hear.) But he proposed to shew, that for what they had actually done they were entitled to something more than mere justice. It was not to be lost sight of that our own people received, in many instances, protection from the natives of the country at great personal risk ; and he had a letter in his pocket from a major of cavalry at Lucknow, dated September 15th, in which he informed him that he and his family, and several other officers, were safely deposited in the house of a native, where they remained for a fortnight, until they had other means of protection. It would be as unfair to deduce the character of the natives of India from the atrocities committed during the revolt, as it would be to take the character of the people of London from the Newgate Calendar. (Cheers.) At the onset of the revolt, 16,000 prisoners were released from the gaols. Of these, as many as two-thirds were persons nominally sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment, but in reality to perpetual imprisonment ; for on failure to provide bail for good conduct at the expiration of their sentence, they still continued in prison. These Dacoits were hereditary robbers, whom the Government had never been able to put down. Their proceedings were marked by great atrocity, and there was no crime which they would hesitate to commit for the discovery of property. Torture with these men was a main instrument of operation. To such men, and to a few infuriated soldiers, writhing under the indignity of irons, which had been put upon their legs, may for the most part be ascribed the atrocities which they all equally deplore, and alike condemn. Such atrocities form no part of the natural character of the Indians. That they would with us revolt at them is proved by the Meetings held to sympathize with the sufferers, and to provide funds for their relief. (Hear, hear.) His attention had been attracted to a newspaper—the “*Weekly Dispatch*”—in which the following beautiful passage occurred, as delineating the character of the Hindoo—

“A nation of rice-eaters ! Two hundred millions of vegetarians ! A vast continent of teetotalers, with whom personal purification, denial of carnal comforts, scrupulous castigation of epicu-

rean appetency, is a fanaticism, an infatuation. What a seed-bed for the faith of Him who knew not where to lay His head; whose meat and drink it was to do His Father's will! Look at the inner nature of the Hindoo; get below the surface of his formal life, deep down to his permanent instincts. Only sensual where priestercraft inculcates it as a duty; fawning and false solely from the oppression of successive tyrants; a pilferer from the betters who have stripped him, and under whose rule no property has been secure; treacherous because himself so systematically cheated and betrayed; cruel and callous to the cries of misery, solely because the savage Asiatic tyrants *set over him know no mercy, and superstition makes him mad: you have to look under all these accidents of history to get at his real nature.* Who more devoted to his master, more affectionate to his family, more susceptible of attachment? See how he loves the children of his Sahib; how they love *him*; with what a reverential chivalry he regards the lady of his lord. How gentle, patient, submissive, long-suffering. In his normal state how humane, kind, and tender. How strong are his domestic ties, how attached to order, peace, and contented industry. When the sulphurous cloud of this mutiny shall have rolled away, we shall discover ten thousand heroic deeds of generosity, forgiveness, and tender humanity, done by poor natives towards their conquerors and alien rulers, which have no parallel in European rebellions. How many fugitives concealed, wretched sheltered, prisoners rescued, naked clothed, and hungry fed! *How many have perilled life* to save the hunted Feringhees; *how many communities* of villages even have risked the conflagration of their homes to defend the footsore wanderers whom they know only as infidels and tax-masters! Nay, how many even of the Sepoys have been compelled to leave us only in self-defence, because we had failed to hold our own, or to protect them against the consequences of resisting what, in the excitement and violence of revolt, might well seem a successful insurrection, in which all who helped the pale stranger against his country and his faith would perish by the sword of the cruel native Rajah! Were we to seek for a nation over the wide world wherein the gentle and contemplative self-denying spirit of the Gospel, with its Eastern customs, and imagery, and character, and life, would take easy and natural root, we know not where we should turn so soon as to the plains of Hindooostan."

It might happen that some gentleman might be present whose experience as a resident in India equalled his own—who, like himself, might have brought up a family in India, and had the same opportunity of acquainting himself with the true character and genius of India. If there was such a person present, he would challenge him to deny the correctness of these relations. He would now allude to the causes of the revolt. These might be briefly summed up in the hatred of the people, which, so far from

being confined to the military force of the country, was diffused over all their empire ; and it was plain that this hatred had only wanted the opportunity to develope itself in something more substantial than mere feeling. (Cheers.) An English gentleman, writing to him in April last from India, said—

“ Only yesterday I heard the bitterest hatred of the English expressed in the most unmeasured terms, contemptuous and indignant, by one of the first natives here ; this by a man of singular power of intellect, speaking and writing many languages with equal facility, and, on account of his intellectual attainments, lately noticed by the Government. ‘ The word of the English,’ said he, ‘ was formerly, as it were, engraved upon granite : now it is written in water. So long as it was politic to keep faith with the natives, who could be more observant of your faith than you English ? Now that you have the country at your feet, you have fairly thrown off the mask. You may not believe me, but I swear I would lay down my head this minute (suiting the action to the word) if I could one whit raise my countrymen from their present condition. It is the repose of a corpse, dead, degraded : there is no need to conceal it, we hate you, and you deserve it.’ This is no historical Thucididean speech, but word for word, as nearly as I can recollect what he said ; and I believe it fairly represents the feelings of the natives towards us, and I for one echo his words, we deserve it.”

That nothing but opportunity was long wanting was clear to him, from a letter lately received from India, dated in September last, in which the writer, one of the most intelligent and one of the most influential men in India, remarks—“ Not the least important causes of the revolt is the growing distrust of the power of England. The idea broached in Parliament, of drawing for troops on India for the Crimean war took intelligent natives by surprise ; and the Chinese and Persian expeditions, undertaken simultaneously, were looked upon as involving the nation in a complication of difficulties. No doubt the causes you mention had their share, the Oude annexation in particular ; and one account states, that no fewer than forty thousand men of the Bengal army came from that province.” Among the annexations which took place in India, Nagpore stood forward as the most prominent one. In that case the power of adoption was set aside, and an insult was cast over the Hindoo population of India. It was not merely an insult. By refusing the adoption, the Government stood between the prince in the performance of the most sacred right of his religion. The performance of the Shraddha was the most sacred right of the Hindoo religion, and the refusal of the adoption prevented the performance of a duty which the Hindoo considered essential to his salvation. Without going further into the subject of annexations, he would remark how deeply the feeling had been evinced in the case of those States which had been annexed. Nana

Sahib himself was an example; the State of Jhansi was another, where all the Europeans were massacred. (Hear, hear.) In the case of Nagpore there was an insult passed upon all the native princes of India: the jewels of the Ranees were not only taken from them, but they were advertised for public auction by the Government in the newspapers of India. A French gentleman, writing to him on that subject from Chandernagore, one who had been resident upwards of thirty years in India, remarks—"Without reckoning the Nagpore and Oude affairs, Lord Dalhousie is very guilty. When you think of the jewels of Nagpore, which were snatched from him then, and sold in Calcutta, one experiences a feeling of disgust. The preventing the adoption of a son to the King of Nagpore was the greatest blunder Lord Dalhousie could make, for he was attacking the greatest families in their existence. It is a greater mistake than Oude." He would now allude to the impressions entertained by the natives generally on the subject of conversion, and of our interference with their religion. He did not pretend to say whether our interference had been well or ill judged; but he would state the impressions which had arisen among the natives as to the object of that interference, and which he believed had made them mad, not only with hatred to our persons, but to Christianity itself. The Missionary, Anderson, of the Free Scotch Church, describes the feeling opposed to Christianity in these words :—

"There is no house where Christianity is not exposed: the disgust with which all classes of the community look upon Christianity is very strong and prevalent at present. We have all heard of the late Meeting: under what feeling did the great men of the Hindoos, the men who could speak English, and had come much in contact with the Europeans, and were supposed not to have the same prejudices and narrow views as the common people—what were the feelings which they shewed in that place? *Every one of them, the most educated of them to the least educated, from the highest caste man to the lowest Pulle, manifested a bitter spirit of enmity against Christianity.* Though people of all castes were brought together at that time, there were no fightings about caste. Though Brahmins and all the lower castes were mixed together, there was a *living sympathy among all the people* that were there: the same spirit filled all their hearts, and out of the fulness of their hearts their mouths poured out curses and blasphemies against Christianity. From a single family up to the *whole nation* the prevailing spirit in the Hindoo at present is *enmity against Christianity*. There is an enmity in each family, and there is a national enmity and a universal enmity filling the breast of *every man and woman of every rank and caste* among the Hindoos: yea, the *whole nation* is moved from its very bottom, and filled with *implacable hatred*, and bent upon the utter destruction of Christianity."

No man was more competent to judge than this gentleman. Although a zealous proselytiser, he was deservedly respected by all as an honest man. The natives, well knowing that he was bent upon their conversion, still flocked to him, from their knowledge of the fact that he was not connected with the Government. This led him to offer an observation on the subject of the view in which Missionaries were regarded by the people. He believed that where Missionaries stood aloof from the Government their labours were most effective; and he had a letter before him at this moment, from a native of India, in which the opinion was openly expressed that the labours of the Missionary, coupled with education and good government, would lead to the fall of Hindooism. So far back as the time of Swartz, they knew that Hyder Ali, when his distrust was so great in the faith of the Government, that he refused to treat with it, offered to transact any business with it through the intervention of Swartz, and "amidst his cruel and desolating career, he gave orders to his officers to permit the venerable padre to pass unmolested, and to shew him respect and kindness;" adding, "he is a holy man, and means no harm to my Government." This fact would be found stated in the Dean of Salisbury's Life of Swartz. If such sentiments could animate a Mussulman, with a natural antipathy to the Christian, how much more were they likely to actuate the Hindoo, the main principle of whose creed was perfect toleration. Had the Government of India stood aloof from proselytism, and allowed the Missionaries to stand alone, it was scarcely possible to doubt that Christianity would have made more progress than it has in India. (Hear, hear.) The number of real converts in India was, it was to be feared, very few, and the conversion of nearly all of those who had adopted the Christian religion might be ascribed to temporal benefit.

The natives of India justly took offence with the Government, on the grounds that it did not keep faith with them in matters of religion. They hear of orders being sent out to that country to prohibit all interference with their religion: simultaneously they read the speech of the Chairman of the East-India House, in which directly the contrary is expressed. A native, writing to him (Mr. Lewin) on the subject, after reading Mr. Mangles' speech in the House of Commons, "that he had no doubt whatever that Providence had been pleased to place the magnificent empire of India in our hands in order that in due time we might be the instruments of converting the inhabitants to Christianity," says— "Several natives came to me shortly after the arrival of the mail, with the paper in their hands, and remarked that the Court of Directors were playing a double game, pretending, in their despatches to India, to set their faces against Government proselytism, while at home they openly profess this object to be their

desire and duty." But the Government of Madras went beyond this. They refused to allow special trains to run on Sundays, not in order to comply with the fourth commandment, but because they were required to convey the natives to their religious festivals. The orders on this subject were shewn to him by Sir James Melvill, at the India House, and the Madras Government were remonstrated with for using such an argument, but that Government had not chosen to bend to the home authorities. He would now refer to two other subjects—the Hindoo law of re-marriages and the law of inheritance on conversion to Christianity. (Cheers.) Great difference of opinion might be allowed as to the propriety of these laws. It appeared to him, that if a foreigner took possession of a new country, he was not bound to overset the laws of that country, even though they might differ in principle from his own, nay, even though they should be religiously opposed to his own. (Hear, hear.) He would say nothing of infanticide and of the suttee, as it appeared to him that the large mass of the people of India agreed with us on those two questions. It was far otherwise in the case of the re-marriage of a Hindoo widow and the change of inheritance consequent on conversion. A French gentleman, writing to him from Chandernapore, remarked—"What is it to a trading Company whether a Hindoo widow re-marry or continue a widow? The change in the law of inheritance clearly tended to the subversion of the Hindoo religion. The Hindoo law and Hindoo custom throughout the country do not recognise the division of ancestral property between the several members of the family. The property of a Hindoo family belonged to the religion as much as to the family itself; and no convert was allowed to take his share out of it under any circumstances. In case of conversion to another religion by any one of the members of a Hindoo family, his share became the property of those who remained in their old faith. When we first legislated on these subjects—when our power was so ill-confirmed that we were obliged to bend to the native customs and laws, in order to conciliate their support—we passed laws, declaring that all suits between Hindoos should be decided according to the laws and customs of the Hindoos; and the Regulations of 1802 were acted up to until we thought ourselves strong enough to supplant the native customs and religion by our own. Whatever might be the merit of our recent enactments, it was plain that we had violated our faith towards the natives of the country, and we have effected radical changes which were not demanded by the voice of the people. (Cheers.) He would now offer a word or two on the treatment which the natives had received at our hands, as also on their qualifications for employment in the public service. If they referred to the men who had had the largest experience of the natives of India, and men who had made themselves most eminent by their abilities, namely, Munroe, Strachey, Sir John Malcolm, and Holt M'Kenzie, they found an

unanimous sentiment in favour of their fitness for any office in the State. (Hear, hear.) They also found that each of these gentlemen alludes, in express terms, to the debasing character of our treatment of them, and the injustice of shutting them out from all lucrative and honourable employment. (Hear, hear.) With the experience before them of the eminent natives who had occupied a high position—with the fact before them that the judicial and revenue administrations were carried on by the means of natives—that not a penny could be collected except through them—that ninety-three per cent. of the civil suits that were decided in India were decided by them—that they had the power at the present time, on their own judgment alone, to decide original suits to an unlimited amount, and on their own authority to sentence to stripes and imprisonment,—with all these facts before them, it could not but excite surprise, that while performing the offices of Englishmen, they should be debarred from the equality of Englishmen. (Cheers.) The 87th Section of the Charter Act declared “all offices open to all persons without distinction of caste, colour, or creed.” This was a wise measure, and, had it been carried out as was intended by the framers, it can be little doubted it would have proved a grand step towards creating an interest in the people to preserve our empire. But it was of no use to give an eligibility to men to enter the civil service, when a voyage to England was made necessary as a preliminary. He would but say a few words regarding the Government of India, which had been most disastrous. They took possession of Oude on the grounds of misgovernment. A short time before the annexation of Sattarah, the East-India Company presented the Rajah with an honorary sword, on the grounds of his having managed the country to the satisfaction of the Government. Here were two opposite cases. In the one they sacrificed a Rajah for misgovernment: in the other they refused to allow even good government to save a native prince. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) The object, it was plain, in both cases, was the same—gain. (Cheers.) Of the effect of our annexations on the feeling of the country towards us, an opinion may be formed, from the sentiments addressed to me by a native of India (whose influence extends far beyond the Presidency in which he resides), in a letter dated in 1856, when the annexation of Oude was as yet incomplete. He says, “It is right I should refer to the general feeling of the natives, in consequence of the late supercessions regarding the adoption of heirs, and the dispossessing of the Zemindars, whose property is immediately bought up by the Government, by a mere nominal payment, which bad feeling will certainly be increased if the succession to the Nawabship of the Carnatic is set aside (it has been set aside) in defiance of the many treaties with the East-India Company guaranteeing its continuance in the family of the present claimant. The kingdom of Tanjore has just been seized;

Oude, Hyderabad, and Travancore are threatened with the earliest convenient absorption ; and the princes and nobility of the country are in a fair way of general extinction, till India will have no more than two classes—the English Government and the Ryots.” Of the remorseless manner in which the annexations were made, an opinion may be formed (as well, also, of our gratitude towards a man, who alone, of all the princes of India, remained faithful to us, when all the others were arrayed in arms against us) from the Minute of General Low, the British resident at Oude, dated January 21, 1842 :—‘ Adverting to the exaggerated rumours of our adversities in Affghanistan, and of their supposed effects, such rumours rendering it desirable to shew to the native community that the confidence of the Oude Government in our stability remains unabated. I thought it desirable to make use of my personal influence with the King of Oude to induce him to lend a considerable sum of money to the Government. He declared, in an earnest and cordial manner, that it gave him great pleasure to carry my wishes into effect. The total sum lent by him, to relieve the British Government from the pressure of the Affghan war, was forty-six lacs of rupees.’ In another Minute, General Low states, ‘that, during the Nepaul war, the King of Oude lent us, free of all cost, 300 elephants. The aid thus obtained for conveying our artillery, ammunition, tents, &c., in our mountain warfare, was of immense value to us, and of a kind which it was totally out of our power to obtain in any other manner, or from any other quarter.’ Comment is here unnecessary.” Were they to test the merits of the two Governments, they would find, on comparison, that their own misgovernment was far more palpable than that of any native prince of India. They had uprooted the native institutions of the country ; they had destroyed the most efficient police that the world ever saw ; they had carried on their revenue and police administration by means of torture. Mr. Halliday, the present Deputy-Governor of Bengal, in his Minute dated April 13, 1856, says—

“ The village police are in a permanent state of starvation : they are all thieves and robbers, or leagued with thieves and robbers ; insomuch that when any one is robbed in a village, it is most probable that the first person suspected will be the village watchman. It is even a question whether an order issued throughout the country to apprehend and confine them would not do more to put a stop to theft and robbery than any other measure that could be adopted. The administration of justice is little better than a lottery.”

The Torture Commissioners, appointed by the Government to investigate the question in Madras, say—

“ The police establishment has become the bane and pest of society, the terror of the community, and the origin of half the misery and discontent that exist among the subjects of the Go-

vernment. Corruption and bribery reign paramount throughout the whole establishment ; violence, torture, and cruelty are the chief instruments for detecting crime, implicating innocence, or extorting money." In their despatch to the Government of India, dated March 13th of the present year, the Court of Directors say—

"That the police in India has lamentably failed in accomplishing the ends for which it was established is a notorious fact : that it is almost useless for the prevention, and sadly inefficient for the detection of crime is generally admitted."

The modes of torture in Madras described by the Commissioners are as follows :—

"The kittee, an instrument applied to the fingers, causing excruciating pain. The anunthal, bending the body towards the feet, putting a heavy stone on the back, and exposure to the sun. Putting pepper and chillies in the eyes. Twisting women's breasts. Fastening in a cocoa-nut shell upon the navel the poolay insect, causing great torment. Nipping the flesh with pincers, searing with hot irons, dipping people in wells till they are half suffocated. These cruelties and others, of which decency forbids the mention, producing permanent injury and loss of limbs, are occasionally persevered in till death ensues."

It is unnecessary to go further into this part of the subject, as those who desire further information, whether as regards Madras or Bengal, would find it in the blue books recently published by Parliament. The result of our rule in India, according to the official records of the Government, was, that anarchy prevailed in all departments. The community dreaded the policeman more than the thief, and the Courts of Justice more than the midnight robber. Instead of applying to the local authorities for redress, it was well known that luttauls, or bludgeon-men, were systematically kept in pay by the planters as instruments of justice. The rebellion took all by surprise, which was a sufficient proof that it was not confined to the military alone. (Cheers.) There were at least 300 civil servants scattered over the province of Bengal. To each of these was attached a numerous native establishment, not one of whom gave the slightest warning of what was coming to pass. But the natives themselves did give a warning. They passed chuppatis through the different villages of the country. The intent of this proceeding was perfectly well known to them, and thousands of them were able to enlighten the Government, had they chosen to do so. A proceeding of that kind was nothing new in India ; and had there been but one person about the Government of any real experience in the country, there would have been no difficulty in putting a right interpretation upon it. (Hear, hear.) But instead of going to the bottom of the matter, the whole was treated with an arrogant feeling which disdained the inquiry which such a proceeding obviously called for. (Cheers.)

His attention had been attracted by a speech recently made by Lord Shaftesbury, in which the atrocities in India had been referred to as if they were unparalleled in the history of the world; and his Lordship supposed that a delicacy had been exhibited in exposing those atrocities, and that there had not been a sufficient call for vengeance and punishment. He would not use the *tu quoque* argument, since the crimes committed at other times would not affect the character of the criminals in these. But his Lordship assumes that the rebellion was wholly of a military character. He asserted that it was not a nation rising for its independence, nor for the integrity of its religion. He said, "Have you found in any one instance a national, or even a symptom of a national rising?" In answer to this, he (Mr. Lewin) would refer briefly to a recent communication from Dr. Duff, who wrote as follows:—

"I am a very long resident in this country, and, having been in a position to hear the true sentiments of the *natives* (*who neither feared me nor required any thing from me*) towards our Government and ourselves, I have been long aware of their hatred towards both, and that opportunity alone was wanted to display it as they have now done; and where it has not been shewn, rest assured it is only from fear or interest, and when they did *not recognise opportunity*. Now, in the face of these, and scores of other substantially similar statements from all parts of the Northwest and Central India, what becomes of the lullaby declarations of those who would fain persuade the British public, that nowhere among the general, civic, or rural population of India does there exist any feeling of ill-will, or discontent, or disaffection towards the British or their Government. All such unqualified declarations I do most solemnly *regard as a gigantic* (I do not say *wilful*) imposition on the British people; an imposition which, if not timeously exposed or abandoned, is sure to prove as fatal to the re-establishment and perpetuity of British supremacy, as it is in itself gigantic. If the seeds of a deadly disease are lurking—though it may be but partially developed—in the very vitals of the constitution, and if the existence of these, in spite of *obvious symptoms and warnings*, be deliberately ignored, what can we expect, except that, one day or other, they will break forth into a raging virulence, which all the art of the most skilful physician can neither mitigate nor arrest.

"It is supposed that the people of the country do not sympathize with the Sepoys, nor join in their bloody deeds. This ought to be corrected, for every hand is uplifted against the man who has a white face. Those villagers who used to throw themselves at my feet in May, come out in June with swords and guns, and all sorts of weapons, to take away my life. I dare not go into the quietest district without a guard of soldiers, nor sleep without a sentry at my door."

Now, Dr. Duff was a gentleman with whose character he was very well acquainted. He (Mr. Lewin) had resided in India for many years during the time that gentleman was there, and, though not of his communion, he could bear testimony to the zeal of his ministry, and to his high character as a man. But if Dr. Duff's testimony were not sufficient, the testimony of Mr. Anderson, already quoted, would set the matter at rest. Were that not enough, the memorial of the Missionaries, addressed to the Supreme Government of India, "On the condition of the population of Bengal," would fill up the gap. The Missionaries, as stated by Lord Canning in his Minutes, "after drawing a painful and lamentable picture of the condition of the rural population of Bengal, of the violence, injustice, and oppression to which they are exposed, and of the sullen discontent, and even hatred, towards their rulers, which has been engendered in them, express a desire that a Commission may be appointed to inquire into the causes of this state of things." Lord Shaftesbury asks, "Who, then, were the mutineers, and from whom arose this fugitive rebellion?" and answers, "It arose from a monster of our own creation: it arose from an army, pampered, flattered, and under-worked." It was possible, in Madras, that a mutiny might take place without the inhabitants of the country being apprised of it beforehand, because there was not that communication between the military and the civil population which exists in Bengal. In Bengal it is part of the condition of the Sepoy service that the Sepoy shall have a portion of the year to spend with his family, and, in consequence, there was a closer union between the civil and military population; and there could not be the least doubt in the mind of any one who had experience of India, that an event, such as the Indian revolt, could not take place unless the whole country had made common cause. The demands for vengeance and justice, on the part of Lord Shaftesbury, appeared to him to be unbecoming in a man who was perpetually reminding them of the requirements of Christianity. (Cheers.) It appeared to him (Mr. Lewin) that it would have been far more appropriate had Lord Shaftesbury, instead of exciting the popular passions—instead of saying, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," appealed to the text, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." (Cheers.) Lord Shaftesbury said, "Again I maintain that, in the sense of humanity, justice, complete justice, must be done to the full, if it be only to check the feeling that is rapidly growing up." Now, it was needless to pursue this subject. The passions of men's minds and hearts were already worked up to a high pitch of excitement; and it was to allay, if possible, the call for indiscriminate punishment, which almost amounted to a national frenzy, that this Meeting was convened, and that he had consented to take part in its proceedings. (Hear, hear.) The

accounts received from India of the destruction of a large portion of the rebels would seem to indicate that justice had already been satisfied, and that the time has arrived when we should rather seek to find a cause for mercy, than a motive for punishment. Lord Shaftesbury said, "Justice, I maintain, must be satisfied. Every principle of policy, every principle of religion, requires it. It is the greatest policy, in the sense of humanity, that justice should be fully exercised." Had the wealth and title of Lord Shaftesbury been held out to him as the reward of uttering such a speech, he solemnly declared that he would not have uttered it. (Cheers.) After some further remarks of a general character, Mr. Lewin concluded by thanking the audience for the attention with which they had listened to his address.

Mr. JONES moved the first Resolution, which was as follows:—

"That whilst the Government is called upon to punish the authors of the atrocities lately committed on our countrymen, country-women, and helpless children, in India, justice demands that full inquiry be made in order to separate such heinous criminals from other persons who, though they may not have been wholly innocent of resistance to the authority of the Government, have been far less guilty."

After some general introductory remarks, he proceeded to denounce that portion of the English press, headed by the *Times*, which had sought to hound on the people of this country against India, and the purport of whose articles was, that a war of vengeance should be waged against the inhabitants. In an illustrated paper, the contest in India had been presented to the world as a contest between lions and tigers, the moral of which was, that a war of extermination had been entered upon: and in another publication, the Christian Queen of England was represented as in the act of wreaking vengeance on her own subjects in India. (Hear, hear.) Was that the attitude in which the Christian people of England wished to be presented in relation to India? (Cries of No, no.) If the character of their Christianity had been truly represented by these publications—if their religion, instead of being one of peace and mercy, was but the embodiment of vengeance and slaughter—he could have no hesitation in declaring that the people of India would be fully justified in any attempt to overthrow British power in that country. (Cheers.) The newspapers to which he alluded did not represent the true feeling of the country. They found that they had gone too far in their demands for vengeance, and there was now a certain degree of moderation visible in their tone. (Hear, hear.) There had been a cry for stern justice, which might signify more than was expressed; and Lord Shaftesbury, he grieved to say, had joined in that cry. He (Mr. Jones) would advocate justice too; but it should be that high kind of justice which recognised mercy, and which, having taken all the circumstances of the revolt into account, and made allowances for the frailty of human nature, would arrive at a temperate and unimpassioned decision. (Hear, hear.) They should not make the English temperament the basis by which they would judge the Indian character; and when they came to talk of justice—of that "stern justice" which was now demanded—they should remember the services which, on

former occasions, the Sepoys had rendered to British interests in India. If the Sepoys had acted with abominable cruelty—if they had committed crimes at which humanity shuddered—Englishmen should bear in mind the fact, that they themselves had made them the instruments of atrocities at which the blood ran cold ; and that, under English command, they had learned lessons of vengeance, in the destruction of life and property, which they could not have been expected to forget. (Hear, hear.) He denied that the atrocities of the recent revolt were, as had been asserted, without parallel in the history of modern times. They had all heard of the atrocities committed by British soldiers in Spain ; nor need he remind them of the immolations in Algeria by the French, with whom they had now fraternized. (Cheers.) Let it not, then, be said that the atrocities of the Hindoos stood alone, and that, in consequence of them, they were driven beyond the pale of civilization. Not only had they fought for England, but they had suffered from England. (Cheers.) There had been a violent and needless interference with many of the most cherished laws and customs of the people, as stated by the previous speaker, and annexations of territory had taken place, which could not fail to provoke their anger and resentment. Our policy in India had been characterized by the most grievous injustice. (Hear, hear.) When our power in the country was weak, we shaped our measures in accordance with it : when we became strong, we thought of nothing but spoliation and aggression : and Lord Dalhousie, acting in opposition to some of the wisest men in India, seemed to have brought that policy to the culminating point. (Hear, hear.) By the annexation of Oude the inhabitants had been subjected to great suffering. Not merely was the country divided and broken up, and the native authorities set aside, but a Commission was appointed to examine into the validity of the deeds by which the nobility held their lands, and thus confusion and discontent were created. Such a course of policy was not the less objectionable because it was carried out in a distant country. What would be injustice in England would be also injustice in India ; and if a Commission, such as that to which he had alluded, were instituted here, they would have an insurrection, in the midst of which, it is not unlikely, would be found Lord Shaftesbury himself. (Cheers and laughter.) When they knew that a large portion of the native troops—the Sepoys—were drawn from Oude, they should not be surprised that these troops were foremost in the insurrection. Having detailed many of the grievances to which the people of India had been subjected, Mr. Jones concluded, amid loud cheers, by calling on the Meeting to ratify the spirit of the Resolution, which would separate justice from vengeance, and protect the innocent while punishing the guilty.

Mr. R. N. FOWLER, in seconding the Resolution, expressed the regret with which he witnessed the inhuman call for vengeance by a portion of the press of this country. That call he repudiated as unchristian and impolitic ; and he believed it would not find an echo in the hearts of the English people. (Hear, hear.) A question had been raised in the House of Commons and in the country, as to whether this was a military revolt or an insurrection. The Government, in order to shift the blame as much as possible from themselves, maintained that it was a mere military revolt. So far as appearances went, the revolt, he believed, did not spread beyond the army, and was very much confined to the Bengal army ; but he apprehended there were circumstances which would prove that the people sympathized with the troops which had re-

volted. (Hear, hear.) It was remarked by Mr. Macaulay—now Lord Macaulay—that India must be governed in India, and that native magistrates had more power in their hands than could possibly be possessed by English functionaries. This he believed was the fact; and in the future Government of India he trusted that it would be remembered and acted upon. (Cheers.) As to the religious feelings of the natives, which were very strong, he contended that the Government ought to respect them; but, at the same time, they ought to allow every facility for Missionary operations. (Hear, hear.) He demanded that full justice should be done to India, both for the sake of that country and for the sake of England, for they were both bound up together. (Hear, hear.) His own opinions were not unfavourable to the Company, but he feared aggression had continually gone on; and while this policy was pursued they must expect to be engaged in wars. (Hear, hear.) Now it was not by wars that they could improve India. (Hear, hear.) If they desired to develop the resources of the country, which were all but illimitable, they must turn their attention to great public works, such as railways and canals. (Hear, hear.) He regretted the part which Lord Shaftesbury, so long devoted to philanthropic projects, had taken, in relation to the revolt, the horrors of which they all equally deplored. (Cries of Hear, hear.) Assuming that the Sepoys were as bad as they had been represented to be, they should still recollect that they were men, and that they had not experienced in their hearts the civilizing influences of that faith which their rulers professed. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, he trusted that the Christian feelings of Englishmen would lead them to declare, that, much as they lamented the horrors which had been perpetrated in India, they desired to see justice in mercy enforced, so that they might carry out the will of Him who came to promote peace on earth and goodwill amongst the children of men. (Cheers.)

Mr. DAWES read a leading article from the *Times* in 1847, which took a view of Indian affairs diametrically opposed to that which they were advocating now, and declared he would rather be the meanest pauper in the workhouse, than be the owner, and have the large revenue, of the *Times*, with the guilt upon his soul of hounding on the people to bloodshed. (Cheers.)

The Resolution was then put, and carried unanimously.

The Rev. CHARLES STOVEL moved the next Resolution—

“That, in discriminating between the innocent and the guilty, and in estimating the degree of guilt in the offenders, it is due to those who merely deserted the Government through fear, to inquire how far their loyalty has been compromised by the inability of the Government to afford them protection in consequence of measures which denuded the country of European troops, and left the inhabitants at the mercy of the insurgents, to whom this insecurity offered a tempting opportunity for revolt.”

He expressed his belief that the steps taken by the Meeting would go but a short way in providing a remedy for the evils under which India suffered: and had he been previously aware that such was the case, he would not have attended. He had heard the description of the injustice done by the British Government to India. It was his impression that the little facts adduced had diverted their minds from the other state-

ments that had been kept back ; and he was convinced that these facts did not give a fair impression of the extent of the sinfulness perpetrated by England on the Indian soil. Upon England now devolved the solemn responsibility of reconstructing that state of society in India which had been all but broken up ; and he trusted that, in undertaking that heavy task, such reforms would be introduced, and such effective changes made, as would save the new structure from the dangers of fresh convulsions. (Hear, hear.) He believed that, even in Delhi, there was a large number of persons belonging to what, in England, they called the "middle class," whose opinions ought not to be despised in the future government of India, and upon whom they could rely in maintaining such reforms in the laws as the condition of the country demanded. (Hear, hear.) Their great object at present should be, to see that the mutiny was effectively put down, and with as much humanity as was consistent with the re-establishment of order; and he believed the task was in the hands of men who would accomplish it. The sooner it was accomplished the better. (Hear, hear.) But let them have no revenge, for revenge did not belong to Christian men. (Cheers.) He was not an advocate for war : he was a man of peace; but he contended that the outbreaks of society ought to be put down ; and, in putting them down, they should use the most direct means. When they came hereafter to deal with India, they should not present justice to the people at the point of the bayonet : that weapon should then be laid aside, and such a course adopted as would be maintained more by the strength of its own equity than by military force. (Hear, hear.) He felt convinced that the British Government had not done its duty in developing the resources of India. These resources might be increased sevenfold in seven years. With regard to religion in India, he maintained that it should be perfectly emancipated from state control ; for it was monstrous that funds should be granted by the Government for temples wherein idols were worshipped : it was monstrous that the Government should, at the same time, support both Juggernaut and Jesus. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. RICHARD SMITH seconded the Resolution, which was adopted.

MAJOR OTTLEY Retired List, Madras Army, moved the third Resolution—

"That, in awarding punishment where crime is proved, mercy calls on the ruling powers to take into due consideration any extenuating circumstances, if such there may be, whether consisting in provocation received in the violation of religious scruples, or in injury inflicted through oppression or injustice, either sanctioned or accidental.

"That it ought to be kept in prominent view that the barbarous crimes recently perpetrated are the acts of a comparatively small number, and repugnant to the Indian character, as shewn by long experience.

"The preservation of the lives of many of our countrymen, on several late occasions, by the spontaneous exertions of natives, at their own great risk, is the strongest proof of this fact, and is convincing evidence that the general massacre of Europeans was not the prevailing object of the insurrection."

He begged to express his gratification that a Meeting had been called

for the purpose of endeavouring to put a stop to proceedings in India—butcheries perpetrated by British soldiers and others—which must bring indelible disgrace on the British character. In the name of justice and humanity he would denounce the perpetrators of those butcheries; and he called upon the country to reprobate the conduct of all who had been guilty of unnecessary bloodshed, or cruelty of any other kind. (Cheers.) Yielding to no man in his detestation of the atrocities which had been committed against Europeans, he would yet ask whether, when “the sufferers in India” were spoken of, some consideration should not be accorded to the sufferings of the natives of that country, who had been brought under a system of, nominally, “martial law,” but, in reality, relentless and undiscriminating vengeance—a vengeance preached, under one euphemism or another, from, alas! how many pulpits on the day of so-called “humiliation!” (Hear, hear.) It was indeed with mingled feelings of horror and disgust that he had read the published notices of several of the sermons preached on that day. Many of the speeches delivered at Meetings held “for the relief of the Indian sufferers” had also been of the most truculent description. In one of them, in particular, a layman having ventured to express his hope that, in the hour of victory, our soldiers would be able to “restrain their feelings” (in other words, to refrain from unjust deeds of blood and rapine), a Reverend Gentleman had thought it his duty to reprove the sentiment, urging that “the present was the time for vengeance: the time for mercy was not yet come.” The mercy of such “ministers of peace” appeared to be the temperance of the sated glutton. “Feast us to our heart’s content with ‘vengeance’ (though some Book says *that does* belong elsewhere), and, lo and behold, we will be clement.” Such was the substance of their cry! They would become excessively forgiving, so soon as they had left no one to be forgiven beyond their blood-polluted selves. (Hear, hear.) But in the present state of most minds in this country, the less said about “mercy,” perhaps, the better. If there was one word that he would have altered in the ably-drawn up Resolution he had just, quite unexpectedly, been invited to propose, it was the word “mercy,” for which he would have substituted “justice;” for justice, the commonest justice, demanded, he considered, that every thing pressed for in that Resolution should be done. (Hear, hear.) It might be well to glance at the nature of the tribunals under sentence of which (when any tribunals at all had been resorted to) life had already so unsparingly been taken. “Military law”—at least as administered to the natives of India—was fraught in its working with oppression; a fact which had forced itself so painfully on his attention many years back, that, in a numerous series of letters, published in the *Madras Spectator* in 1838 and 1839, he had felt it his duty to point out the imperative necessity of an amelioration of the system, if justice, and not merely convictions, were the object to be attained. The native tried by a court-martial knew, of course, nothing of English modes of judicial investigation,—nothing of the language in which the proceedings were recorded. Arrayed against him as prosecutor (the prisoner himself being totally undefended and unassisted) was an influential European official (the Judge-Advocate), who had, *in limine*, prepared the charge against him, and who, finally, at the termination of the inquiry, was closeted with the Court, as its “*legal adviser*,” while the Court was arriving at its finding and sentence,—the prisoner having, in the mean time, been removed to the guard-room. Lastly, the native prisoner (and here a specially strong emphasis should

be laid on the word “*native*”) was, to the end of time, (at least such was the practice in the Madras Presidency), denied a copy of the proceedings on his trial:—whereas every *European* tried by a general court-martial (“or any one on his behalf”) was, whether acquittal or conviction had ensued, entitled, after the lapse of a reasonable fixed period from the close of the trial, to demand to be supplied with such a document:—a most important guarantee for justice, and one which the chairman of that very Meeting, in his generous efforts on behalf of the 6th Madras Light Cavalry, had repeatedly, but vainly, striven to obtain for the native,—who obviously required it still more than the European. (Hear, hear.) But “*military law*,” even as administered to the natives of India, was equity itself as compared with “*martial law*,” as proclaimed by the Supreme Government; and “*martial law*,” as proclaimed by the Supreme Government, was Utopian justice and humanity, as contrasted with the course which appeared to have, in practice, been pursued. (Hear, hear.) To allude for a moment to the “*greased cartridges*.” This was a point to which he attached far more importance than many did. A letter written by a lady at Meerut, before the outbreak, and which had been published in one of the papers, went to prove that the 3d Bengal Cavalry had earnestly *petitioned* against these offensive cartridges; and it seemed extremely probable that, had not the reasonable prayer of that petition been rejected, the horrors which England, and still more, if possible, unhappy India, had had to deplore, would never have occurred. (Hear, hear.) After dwelling in terms of strong reprobation on the putting to death of untried individuals at Peshawar, by orders transmitted by electric telegraph, on the mere report of a spy; on the firing “without questions asked” (*i. e.* without *challenging*) on all natives approaching an encampment near Allahabad; on the sending out parties of soldiers from Allahabad to hang *all* natives who might be found upon the roads (!); on the setting fire, the same morning, to the houses of natives at the same station, and firing grape-shot on the inmates when rushing out to save their lives; on the un-English invention by which intense mental and bodily agony had been studiously made, by the officer in command at Cawnpore, to precede the infliction of death; and on other examples of the ruthless manner in which the natives of this country had been treated;—the speaker called upon the Meeting to repudiate these acts, and “*all such*” acts, as alike unwarrantable in themselves, discreditable in the eyes of Europe, and calculated justly to incense the much-wronged people of India. (Cheers.)

Mr. F. W. CHESSON, in seconding the Resolution, said that he thought it was of the highest importance that the Meeting should impress upon the Government the duty of developing the resources of India to a far greater extent than had ever yet been attempted. He believed that our greatest security against future revolt was to be found in making the trade between England and her Indian possessions more and more profitable, so that the two countries would be united by those bonds of mutual self-interest which would far more surely maintain British supremacy in the East than the 100,000 English bayonets which the *Times* had proposed to despatch as a permanent resident force. (Hear, hear.) We had shamefully neglected the commercial interests of India; and he referred to the question of cotton supply as an illustration. Owing to our neglect of India in this respect, we were almost altogether dependent for our cotton upon the slave pro-

duce of the United States; and that country really possessed a monopoly of the markets of the world. (Hear, hear.) The imports of American cotton into this country have increased from 1,018,361 bales in 1842, to 1,784,388, in 1852; while the imports of East-India cotton, which amounted to 254,881 bales in 1842, had actually decreased to 213,183 in 1852. There could be no doubt that these deplorable results were occasioned by misgovernment on the part of the East-India Company. On this point he would quote one from many striking facts which had been published by General Briggs. "In Guzerat," said the gallant gentleman, "746 pounds of clean cotton may be raised on seven acres of land, giving 106 pounds per acre. The land-tax on the same is 5*l.* 12*s.*, being 16*s.* per acre. This cotton, estimated at 2½*d.* per pound, which is 40 per cent. more than its value at Dharwar, will sell for 1*l.* 1*s.*; from which if we deduct 16*s.*, we have scarcely more than 25 per cent. of the whole produce to pay the expenses of cultivation, and for the return of interest on capital, while the Government receives 75 per cent. of the whole produce as the tax." (Hear, hear.) He believed that if the Government were to construct great public works in India they would not only immeasurably increase the prosperity and contentment of all classes of the people, but would succeed admirably in a financial point of view. (Hear, hear.) The western road from Madras has already reduced the cost of transit from 6½*d.* to 1½*d.* per mile. The works for the improvement of irrigation in the same Presidency, which have cost in fourteen years the sum of 55,000*l.* only, have realized 70 per cent. profit to Goverment, besides all the profits derived by private individuals. The Jumna Canal cost 90,000*l.*, and produces a revenue of 25,000*l.* (Hear, hear.) These were but a few facts gleaned from a multitude which he might quote; and to his mind they served to prove, that if we would construct and encourage in India works of internal improvement and industrial enterprise—if we would open up the great rivers of India, lay down railroads, and dig out canals, where railroads and canals are needed—if we would make the cultivation of opium give place to the growth of cotton—if we would look for our revenue to be paid by a great and prosperous community, rather than to be ground out of the wretched Ryot in the shape of an oppressive land-tax, or a still more odious salt-tax;—if, in brief, we would give to our Indian fellow-subjects good government, just laws, and the practice as well as the theory of Christianity, British rule in India would be established on a foundation far more durable than that of the greatest empire sustained by the sword alone. (Cheers.)

Dr. HODGKIN moved the fourth Resolution—

"That it is the duty of England, as a Christian country, to repress the spirit of vengeance now generally excited, and to bear in mind, that punishment without proof, severe and cruel in its kind, and confounding the innocent and the guilty in its execution, can only tend to degrade our national character to the level of those whose atrocities we condemn.

"That, on the contrary, in seeking to restore peace and tranquillity to India, now distracted by rebellion, both policy and religion enjoin that the aim of England must be to recognise the inalienable rights of the natives, in common with our own, and to provide, that whilst all classes are concerned in the establishment and maintenance of the Government, the people may be protected from the abuse of power; that they may be free by their

just obedience, and the magistrates honourable by their wise administration. The general recognition of these opinions, in England, would be hailed with acclamation in India, and the standard of revolt would soon be deserted."

In supporting the Resolution, he expressed his regret that the Rev. C. Stovel had left the room before all the Resolutions had been proposed, as he believed that the one which he had to move contained in itself the substance of the reforms which that gentleman desired. With respect to the first portion of the Resolution, little need to be said. Even those who did not agree with him, and with the members of the Society to which he belonged, in believing all war was inconsistent with the precepts of our Saviour, must, nevertheless, condemn as un-Christian the acts of our own soldiers on such occasions as the sieges of Badajos and San Sebastian. (Hear, hear.) Yet the language of the press was calculated to excite to the repetition of similar atrocities. He believed that these efforts to stimulate the spirit of vengeance were occasioned by the desire to diminish the difficulty of raising recruits for the army; and he could but rejoice in the existence of that difficulty. In speaking to the second part of the Resolution, he referred to the recent excellent work of Bruce Norton, which was in accordance with much that had been stated by the Chairman, and he recommended it to general perusal. He urged the impolicy of the cry for severity; and cited the example of one of the oldest revolts recorded in history. When Rehoboam, in reply to the appeal of his people, took the counsel of the young men, and said his father had chastised them with whips, but that he would chastise them with scorpions, ten tribes revolted from his rule. (Hear, hear.) In like manner our Indian fellow-subjects, to whom the vindictive policy of this country must be known, would be excited to a more general and obstinate revolt. On the other hand, by recognising the principles embodied in the Resolution, the intelligent portion of the Indian community would be conciliated to allegiance, and, instead of the Indian Government being obliged to gag the press, it would become the powerful agent of diffusing those sentiments by which order would be restored, and loyalty to our authority be promoted. (Cheers.)

Mr. JOHN DICKINSON, Jun., seconded the Resolution. He declared that he attended the Meeting, not knowing what the character of it would be, for the sole purpose of raising his voice against the indiscriminate punishment of the Indian people. (Cheers.) He was heartily delighted to find that some of the most resolute protests against the atrocities of British soldiers in India had come from military men. (Hear, hear.) Most of the English community in India had suffered either in person or property by the revolt; and, on that account, some allowance should be made for their exasperation against those engaged in it. It was certainly the duty of those who had not come in contact with the mutiny to soothe and calm down that feeling. If England wished to retain India, they should begin a new course of policy, by acknowledging that, in many respects, they had not governed the country well. (Hear, hear.) Of this they might be certain, they could not hold India by a continuance in that policy which had been hitherto enforced. (Cheers.)

The Resolution was then adopted.

On the motion of Dr. HODGKIN, seconded by MAJOR OTTLEY, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman, and the Meeting separated.